

24 August 1971

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. [REDACTED]
Chief, European Division

SUBJECT : Permanent Staff Position - European
Historical Officer.

REFERENCE : Memo, Deputy Chief, EUR Div., 17 August 1971,
"Programming for the Completion of Station
Histories."

1. I wish to express myself to you as one no longer involved but who retains a sense of concern for his life-long profession.

2. Referent memorandum, copy attached, effectively terminates the position of European Historical Officer, which position had been unslotted. Without any intention toward slighting your wisdom, I feel these things need be said as I have heard enough derision spoken in the past eighteen months to convince me there is prevalent a very unhealthy attitude in the Division and, perhaps, the Agency at large, toward intelligence history. . . almost a sincere desire to bury the past or a repugnance in looking into the dust or rattling the bones in the closet. A specific example of unappreciation. . . [REDACTED] said, in substance, at the meeting with [REDACTED], "all we need is the listing of manpower, money and production figures to tell us what we want to know" about the past. . . to which, I replied, "you mean, a statistical analysis?"

3. The implication of the above attitude is that operational people are too involved with the problems of making history to be concerned about the writing of history. The stand-out exceptions in my personal encounters have been such busy people as [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Both, independently of each other, have given considerable time to the effort and have expressed keen concern that the past be recorded and interpreted as it was, the good and the

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bad, the brilliant and the stupid. This I had started to do but unfortunately I needed another six months beyond my contract to finish.

4. My concern now is to pass on to you what I sincerely believe is important to the future of the Division and why there should be two permanent slots allotted for a Historical Officer and a secretary. If the economy drive resulted in reducing your staff to three key officers I would say one ought to be an operations officer, the other a support officer and the third one, a historical officer! . . . the future and the past. . . going to do and that which has been done. The Historical Officer properly employed, should be the memory bank. No documents should be retained in the Division beyond two years. The Records Manager should take guidance from the Historical Officer (HO). The HO should determine records of historical value, card/cross index them for retrieval and the gradual bringing up of the formal history of each station and the division to within five years of the present and then supplemented in five-year periods thereafter. This is the Agency policy. In essence, if the HO is properly qualified and given the assistance needed from time to time he should be the referent point for every subject that comes up in the Division requiring depth beyond two years. His keeping his records up to this point in time could prove invaluable to all branch chiefs. To be properly informed, he should be the silent member of all division staff meetings and kept abreast with current developments. For what it is worth, the US military uses this method in all theater commands. . . the Historical Officer is indeed their memory officer as the military in the field must be kept lean on files and yet fully aware of the past. Instead of two-year's lag, USEUCOM and USAREUR keep within six months of a year at most of the past.

5. Properly employed and utilized, the HO most certainly should never be a sinecure position but, to the contrary, a vital officer in the daily conduct of operations, not the librarian nor curator nor necessarily the repository officer of past performances but the one who could advise on the significance of current trends, the one who could answer how we got to where we are and why. Just as the mind cannot function in terms of what to do without drawing on its memory cells of what is known or what has been done, so the HO should perform this role. When the Agency was

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young, memories were fresh, but as the years have gone by and most of these living memories are gone or soon to be gone from the scene, the need for an HO becomes greater and greater with each year that passes. [REDACTED] is a good example, no one person on duty today has a clear, comprehensive picture of the multitude of operations, the complexities of GIA's coordination role, legal status and liaison functions and how we got where we are. My experience these past months has been quite literally likened to the fable of the five blind men and the elephant. . .with all due respect to [REDACTED] Hugh, members of the [REDACTED] Branch, and the dozens of others, [REDACTED], et al.

6. My point having been made above, I do urge you to consider this role seriously and somehow provide for retention of the unfinished carding, drafts and documents which will be on hand in December 1971 when our present staff is relieved, dispersed or washed out. Of course, in my view, I would urge the assignment of a permanent HO before this staff is dissolved in order to permit our efforts to serve as the basis for the proper establishment of the European Historical Office.

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[REDACTED]
European Historical Officer

Attachment: cy of ref.

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17 August 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, EUR Historical Branch

SUBJECT : Programming for the Completion of Station Histories

REFERENCE : Your Memorandum, dated 3 August 1971, "The [REDACTED] History"

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1. Following our meeting of 16 August 1971 and a review of your report and recommendations regarding the [REDACTED] Station History, the status of the European Division historical effort was reviewed and it was concluded that we have no choice but to adhere to the established schedule. 25X1X4

2. You are therefore requested to plan to complete the current phase of all histories, to the best of your ability, by 31 December 1971. To assist, the [REDACTED] Branches have been asked to appoint advisors to expedite the completion of those histories. It is understood that little progress will have been made on the history of [REDACTED] Station. 25X1X4

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[REDACTED]
Deputy Chief
European Division

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